

DO NOT WRITE

AMERICAN LOCATION, BEIRUT

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

January 16, 1951

Review of the Local Arabic Press
Appearing on January 16, 1951BEIRUT (Editor: Muhyiddin Nassif, Annal-Usselem, opposition)

wants the Minister of Finance to enlighten the Lebanese public on the reserve funds with the government because it says that although these funds should be in tens of millions, rumors are circulating throughout Lebanon that only two million pounds are left of them. The paper then points out that the 1948 and 1949 budgets have registered a saving of 48,016,000 pounds and wonders if this sum has been spent and if so, on what project and what is the balance left. "We are not alone in putting this question. Emil Lahhud, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Financial Committee is putting this question himself in his valuable report which we published two days ago. It appears that he is not reassured about the remaining reserve funds in the Treasury and the Lebanese people are worried about their reserve funds which have registered these many millions in two years only...The Minister of Finance must rest assured that we are putting this question not in order to embarrass him, but we are doing so in accordance with the saying 'sound accounts make sound friendships.'"

AL-HAYAT (Editor: Kamil Muruwwa, Shi-Musle, independent)

comments editorially on the forthcoming meeting of the Arab League Political Committee and says in part:

"Since the Palestine tragedy, the Arab world has lost all confidence in the activities of the Arab League and has started to cast on its meetings and discussions a look full of pain, anger and sarcasm...After a few days, the Arab League Political Committee will resume its sessions in Cairo. The conditions in the Arab countries are growing from bad to worse while the international situation is becoming increasingly confused and threatening great dangers. We do not know if the rulers of the Arab states realize what is awaiting them and their countries if a new world war should break out. If they feel an iota of responsibility, then the meeting of the Political Committee must result in an extensive Arab agreement which would return to these states some prestige and confidence. We are positively sure that the independences of the Arab states are threatened with extinction by the storm of the war. We do not see any benefit from alliance or neutrality if this is not preceded by a general military union in one form or another..."

AL-HAYAT's Special Correspondent writes that the Council of Ministers met last evening for three hours during which it took a decision to send a delegation to China. The correspondent believes that Lebanon and Syria

- 2 -

prefer to discuss this question at the forthcoming meeting of the Political Committee in Cairo and that Lebanon sympathizes with the idea of regarding Communist China as an aggressor if the United Nations would take a decision in this respect.

AL-'AMAL (Maronite, opposition, organ of the Lebanese Phalange Party)

tells the Lebanese people that they should no longer believe the government's promises for development projects because it will not take the trouble to realize such projects and because it is now making these promises in order to appease the discontented districts shortly before the elections. In another editorial, the paper criticizes the government's internal policy and demands that Lebanon assume a neutral position in the present international strife in order to avoid all dangers.

AL-YAWM (Editor: Yusuf al-Tibi, Sunni-Moslem, Arab nationalist)

439 argues that the cause of the present high cost of living is not only due to the greed of the merchants but also to the unreasonable behavior of a group of people who are buying goods and necessities not for their immediate use but for hoarding and exploiting them in the future. Therefore, the paper asks the government to curb the high prices on the basis of fixing reasonable profits for the merchants and preventing the sale of essential goods except when their use is justified in the present circumstances.

AD-DIYAR (Pro-government, Greek-Orthodox) 700

highly praises Dr. Muhammad Salahiddin, the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs and says that he is one of the most efficient and mature Arab politicians because his maturity and intelligence have won for the Arabs and for the Arab issues in general a lot of respect in international circles - the respect which dwindled greatly after the Arabs' defeat in Palestine. The paper then lauds the Egyptian Minister's attitude at Lake Success and in England and his wise and bold action when he counseled the demonstrators in Cairo to stop demonstrating because the evacuation of the British troops and the unity of the Nile Valley could not be realized by wanton and destructive action. The paper concludes:

"Dr. Salahiddin has, by his action, founded a school of politics in the Arab East. The Arabs in all their countries pray to God to inspire their leaders to join this school because it is the cornerstone in the awakening of the Arab peoples who greatly need politicians of Muhammad Salahiddin's type."

This paper reports that most of the Lebanese parties and personalities are now consulting with one another concerning a decision on the policy which the Lebanese delegation to the Arab League should follow toward the present international situation. The paper

- 3 -

says that Lebanon will not formulate a unilateral policy but will collaborate with the Arab League states in this regard. It then explains after asserting that the Arabs desire to co-operate with the Western democracies but are reluctant to side with one camp against another:

"The Arab League will study all the conditions which it regards as basic for seriously considering the joining of one camp against another. Egypt will be ~~cornerstones~~ ^{cornerstones} in the discussions because it is the biggest Arab state. It is believed that the Arab states will be divided into two sections. One section will join the Western democracies and the other section will remain neutral. It is said that Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia will join the Western alliance; while Lebanon, Syria and Yemen will stand outside the struggle. This does not at all mean a division in the views of the Arab countries but it will, on the contrary, be made with their approval. Those who advance this view say that the reason which is motivating the Arab states to assume this attitude is that they wish to reconcile their desire for neutrality with their desire to satisfy the Western powers in order to realize their national aspirations which require the approval of the Western powers so that they will achieve them by peaceful ways."